GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4332
ANSWERED ON:24.08.2005
PHASING OUT MERCURY FROM HOSPITALS
Bishnoi Shri Kuldeep

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has prepared any plan to phase out mercury from all Government and Private Hospitals ;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (DR.ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a) to (c): There are no known cases of health problems resulting from the involvement of mercury in hospitals. The breakage of mercury thermometers may lead to spillage of some mercury but the same is supposed to be collected as a part of the hospitals health and safety practices and mercury bearing waste, irrespective of the source of generation containing mercury and mercury compounds equal to or greater than 50-mg. per kilogram is required to be disposed of only as per the requirement of the Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules as amended in May 2003. While Mercury thermometers/sphygmomanometers used traditionally for measuring body temperature/blood pressure have been replaced in some countries due to environmental concerns, there are also concerns in many countries about the availability, affordability and accuracy of alternative devices. At present there is no proposal to phase out the use of mercury based instruments in Government Hospitals as also in private health facilities.